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ABSTRACT

United Vocational Preparation (UVP) is a scheme or strategy organized in England to assist young people to make successful progress during the transition from school to work. It consists of courses and assistance to young workers on an individualized basis. This guide is intended to help educators to construct and conduct schemes of UVP. The document is organized in three parts. Part 1 is composed of five sections which deal with the essentials of UVP. Such questions as What is UVP? Who are served by UVP? Why UVP? How should programs be designed? and What approaches and teaching methods are appropriate? are answered in this part. In Part 2, a model of the learning process is suggested which enables one to discuss it without prejudging where any learning should take place or who should be responsible for facilitating it. Some existing approaches are described in terms of this model, and frameworks are suggested within which learning objectives can be derived, checked for balance, and then analyzed in order to indicate appropriate methods of teaching and learning. Part 3 is concerned with a variety of issues which usually arise in the course of implementing a scheme of UVP, such as the organization of the program, staffing, staff development, location and length of program, residential period, counseling, the composition of groups, evaluation of course and participants, resources, and marketing. (KC)

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Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit

ED217126

EXPERIENCE REFLECTION LEARNING

suggestions for organisers of schemes of Unified Vocational Preparation

GE030 881

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The Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit (FEU) is an advisory, intelligence and development body for further education. It was established in 1977 by the Secretary of State for Education and Science to make possible a more co-ordinated and cohesive approach to curriculum development in FE by

(1) reviewing the range of existing curricula and identifying overlap, duplication and deficiencies

(2) determining priorities for action to improve the total provision and suggesting ways in which improvement can be effected

(3) carrying out specific studies, helping with curricular experiments, and contributing to the evaluation of objectives, and

(4) disseminating information about the process of curriculum development in FE.

After an initial review the Board of Management decided that the work of the Unit should be concentrated initially on the lower levels of further education, and that one of its programmes should support the Government initiative on Unified Vocational Preparation. To this end one of the Unit's Development Officers, Geoffrey Stanton, has prepared the present document which offers guidance to those contemplating, or involved in, the preparation of UVP schemes. Extra copies are obtainable from the Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit, Room 5/81, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London SE1 7PH.

Geoffrey Melling
Director

Reprinted January 1981

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Preamble

Schemes of Unified Vocational Preparation have been operating since September 1976, with new schemes starting all the time. This is therefore an appropriate time to issue some initial guidance for prospective scheme organisers, drawing upon the experience accumulated so far. In the preparation of these notes for guidance, a variety of existing schemes was visited and whilst it was not possible for me to visit every scheme personally I tried to see each of the significantly different types. In addition, I had access to documentation from other schemes, and many individuals employed in both training and education gave valuable information and advice. I also visited a number of centres where the setting up of a scheme was only being contemplated, in order to get some idea of the problems being encountered and questions being asked.

UVP itself may have only started recently, but, of course, many individuals and institutions have had an interest in this area for some considerable time. I am well aware that, even for those not involved as yet in UVP itself, many of the ideas and approaches discussed in this document are not new. It is hoped, however, that putting them into some sort of framework and relating them to a particular situation may be of help in the planning and implementation of future schemes.

I was aware of three major constraints when preparing these guidelines.

The **first** was that we have, at the moment, pilot schemes in operation, with the idea of developing and testing different kinds of provision. Therefore, although guidance was being asked for it could not be prescriptive. In practice, I did not find this a problem because of a belief that, in any case, our most useful function was to draw attention to the issues at stake and to discuss factors which have been found to influence local decisions. Scheme organisers prefer and need to reach their own practical judgements in the light of local knowledge of resources, needs, attitudes and general circumstances. Indeed, since all these vary so much (and given the nature of the problem), schemes will only be successful where there is real commitment and a flexible awareness of the issues. These will derive from and be expressed in involvement in local planning. Thus arguments are more important than conclusions in these guidelines, and practice will be analysed rather than advocated.

The **second** was that I observed a variety of practice (much of which I found very heartening) which achieved **different** kinds of success. I therefore needed a framework in which to describe the strengths and weaknesses, and relationships between, various approaches. I found as I went on that I developed a model (modified from one suggested by a member of H.M. Inspectorate for another purpose) which helped me. This is described in section 6.

The **third** was the need to reflect a recognition that training and education are related aspects of a single process of learning designed both to prepare for employment and to lead to a broader personal development. For the most part, the young people we are concerned with receive, at present, little if any education or training. Therefore, to decide what education and what training they need, and then to discuss how these can be integrated, would seem to be to create unnecessary difficulties. Indeed, to categorise their learning in this way would in itself be to go against UVP philosophy. The strategy I have therefore followed is to suggest that those concerned with (and for) the young people should identify what their learning needs are, both in terms of objectives and methods, and as a secondary issue decide which of these needs are best met in-company or in college, or elsewhere, and who is the most appropriate 'tutor' in any given case. The learning model outlined in section 6 is specifically intended to allow for and encourage this approach.

The difficulty here is lack of suitable words. I have tried to avoid using those which seem to prejudge the nature of the learning or its location. For instance, the word 'tutor' is usually chosen in preference to either teacher or trainer, 'participant' or 'young person' instead of student or trainee, 'scheme' instead of course or programme, and the obscure phrase 'external agency' instead of college. However, it has not always been possible to sensibly avoid the use of these and similar terms. This is particularly the case in sections 9 to 17 which are concerned with matters of practical implementation. I should therefore like to re-emphasize that, except where the contrary is specifically stated, comments made refer to the scheme as a whole and not to a particular component of it.

Another linguistic difficulty is that I have wanted to refer to the necessity of being aware of an individual student's needs, without wishing to imply that the young person concerned will usually be male. It is conventional to say that for 'he' should be read 'she' wherever necessary, but it is particularly apposite in this case because young women are much under-represented in current further education, and therefore form a majority of the UVP target group.

Finally, I would like to say how indebted I am to all those individuals and institutions who were so helpful to me in this document's preparation. There is a lot of commitment, enthusiasm and hard work going into UVP schemes. The suggestions made in these guidelines do not come out of thin air, but derive from a variety of local practice and plans. The analysis, emphasis and omissions remain mine, of course. The FE Unit wishes to stimulate debate and identify issues, and for this reason, as well as the desire to improve these guidelines, I would greatly welcome comment on them.

GEOFF STANTON
Development Officer
Further Education Unit

Introduction

(i) BACKGROUND

Unified Vocational Preparation is concerned with young people, who, at present, receive little if any systematic education or training when they first enter work. Very often they have not benefitted as fully as they might have done from their previous schooling, for various reasons. Because of this, they acquire jobs which may make few demands in terms of specific skills or knowledge, and therefore systematic vocational training is not usually considered necessary by their employers. They themselves are often not favourably disposed towards a continuation of their personal education. Nevertheless, there seems little reason to suppose that they will find the ever-sharper transition from school to work any easier than anyone else, and it is likely that inadequate support at this time makes the transition more difficult and haphazard and imposes unnecessary limitations. It may restrict the young entrant's immediate satisfaction in his job and his future development, and it may lessen his value to the enterprise of which he is a part. The neglect of 40 per cent of all school-leavers contrasts with the substantial resources devoted to the education and training of the other 60 per cent. It has been suggested that at least part of the reason for the lack of provision for these youngsters is attributable to the separate development of education and training. It has also been suggested that problems of motivation and some learning difficulties might be overcome by a unified approach which combined education and training elements inseparably in a provision which would be focussed on the working situation, and which could be clearly seen by young people entering work and by their employers as being relevant to their needs. These suggestions are made in *UVP–A Pilot Approach*, a Government statement made in March 1976 (paragraphs 6 and 7) which should be read in conjunction with this document.

(ii) STRUCTURE OF THESE GUIDELINES

The document that follows falls into three parts.

Part I is composed of five sections, which deal with some of the above issues in more detail by considering some basic questions often asked by those wishing to get to grips with UVP for the first time.

In Part II is suggested a model of the learning process which enables one to discuss it without prejudging where any learning should take place or who should be responsible for facilitating it (section 6). It avoids using the terms 'training' or 'education' at all, and it also embodies a view of the learners as active participants in this process, emphasizing their adult status as well as helping to ensure that the learning is both meaningful to them and relevant to their needs. Some existing approaches are described in terms of this model (section 7), and frameworks are suggested within which learning objectives can be derived, checked for balance, and then analysed in order to indicate appropriate methods of teaching and learning (Section 8).

Part III is concerned with a variety of issues which usually arise in the course of implementing a scheme of UVP (sections 9–17).

In other words, Part I is, in a sense, introductory to the treatment of the major curricular issues which takes place in Part II. Part III is composed of sections of a rather different kind, which are inter-related but do not follow a sequential argument, and which may be referred to as required.

Opposite most pages of text are some illustrative notes. There are also some side-headings indicating the matters being considered in that part of the section. It is hoped that these will be found more helpful than irritating.

Some initial questions

Notes

[1] The "Report by HM Inspectors on Curricula for non-participant 16–19's", (March 1976) refers to evidence of "how fragmented and chancey this process (of transition) has become in our highly differentiated society".

[2] "When a young person leaves school and starts work two dramatic and fundamental developments coincide, the one environmental and the other internal". First Report of the Study Group on "The Education/Training of the 16–18 year old" Rubber and Plastics Processing Industry Training Board, April 1975.

not an additive "course"

[3] "All this learning will occur whether or not there is an external intervention; it will take place intuitively and hapazardly unless the young person's experience is deliberately structured to help him to learn. The possible structuring of that experience in such a way as to bring benefit to the individual as well as to the wider society of which he is a member lies at the heart of the long standing demand for some form of continued education for all young people after leaving school." RPP ITB Study Group–First Report .

[4] **The Government Statement should be read in conjunction with these Guidelines.**

Further information about the administration and funding of the Pilot Schemes can be obtained from the Joint Secretariat of the Inter Departmental Group responsible for them. They are Mr J Phillips, Training Services Division of the MSC, 162-168, Regent Street, London, Tel. 01-214-6683; and Miss J A Gilbey, DES, Elizabeth House, York Road, London, SE1 7PH, Tel. 01-928-9222 ext 2528.

four general aims.

[5] Since a significant proportion of the learning needs of these young people will derive from the demands made on them by the work situation in general and by their own job in particular, employers need not fear that their requirements will be neglected.

having a course, rather than taking a course.

not a selection process.

What is unified vocational preparation?

It is a coherent scheme organised so as to assist a young person to make successful progress during the transition from school to work and adolescence to adulthood. [1] [2]

It is a scheme rather than a 'course' because it is based upon the principle that experiences from which young people can learn take place in a variety of contexts, and that this learning can be facilitated and extended by a variety of agencies.[3] In so far as the distinctions are valid or helpful one might say that,

Social learning can take place in a vocational context, and
Personal development in a social context;
Vocational performance is improved by personal development;
Personal development accompanies the acquisition of a vocational skill;
and so on.

This could be re-phrased to say that education is not just what goes on in college, and training is not just what goes on in industry or at a skill centre. Rather, UVP is a combined scheme to achieve agreed objectives. For instance, in some schemes these objectives may be worked towards during a combination of a company organised induction programme, systematic work-experience, attendance at an FE college and at a residential centre. The nature and extent of the activities in each place will vary between schemes as will the number and location of 'components'. However, all will be directed towards the common aim of supporting the process of transition.

The Government's statement, *Unified Vocational Preparation, a Pilot Approach*,[4] says

"as part of the broad aim of giving young people a fair start in working life, initial vocational preparation should assist young people:

(i) to assess their potential and think realistically about jobs and careers;
(ii) to develop the basic skills which will be needed in adult life generally;
(iii) to understand their society and how it works;
(iv) to strengthen the foundation of skill and knowledge on which further education and training can be built."

How does UVP differ from conventional courses ?

Traditionally, a college or similar institution offers a range of courses. Prospective students are then enrolled for the one which seems most appropriate. In this case a group of young people is first identified locally and then a scheme is designed to cater for their needs.[5]

This is not merely to allow for variations in need and capacity between groups, but is an essential feature of the UVP concept.

Traditional courses usually lead to a specific level of employment or of higher education, which implies selection of participants (either at entry or during the course), and nationally standardised qualifications. UVP caters for a wide range of young workers, helping them with the activities they are already engaged in. Although it might identify and develop unsuspected talents it is not a function of the course to select (for promotion, for instance).

Notes

[1] Such as shelf-filling in a supermarket, or simple production work (eg buffing rough edges off moulded components). In some cases, however, this view depends on a blinkered perception of what constitutes 'vocational skills' – often equating it too easily with the practical – and/or an underestimation of the range of demands being made of the young person. This last is more likely in the case of a shop assistant or forecourt attendant than for a production-line worker, of course.

their jobs

[2] Some of them are 'new crafts', such as work with 'fibre-glass'; others are jobs which require a range of minor skills, such as employment with the technical services departments of local authorities on grass-cutting, driving, cleaning and general maintenance.

[3] "For many of those who were poor 'exam' performers, schooling has not only failed to develop self confidence and positive self-esteem, but has rejected them as 'failures' in every respect." Second Report of the Study Group on "The Education/Training of the 16–18 year old" Rubber and Plastics Processing Industry Training Board, December 1976.

previous education

[4] "The upward trend in achieving academic awards does not necessarily ensure an improvement in preparation for adult life or in problem solving, ability." RPP ITB Study Group, 2nd Report.

abilities

[5] Or the equivalent provision under the forthcoming Youth Opportunities Programme.

[6] The problems raised by the recruitment of young people who have no work experience – either because they are unemployed but not part of a 'work experience programme', or because they are employed but participating in a block release UVP scheme which immediately follows their appointment – will be considered in the later section on 'mode'.

UVP
in connection with WEP

Who are the young people concerned?

They are in jobs in connection with which they receive little or no systematic education or training. Experience has shown that these jobs range from those in which the relevant specific skills can be acquired quickly ' on the job' – because they are thought to be few in number and not very complex[1] – to occupations which make considerable demands on the young people in terms of both specific job-skills and general ability but for which no coherent preparation has previously been organised.[2]

Some of them will have been anxious to escape from anything to do with 'education', perhaps associating 'teaching and learning' with anxiety and failure.[3] These will be particularly apprehensive about any college-based component of a scheme. Others will be pleased and flattered to be attending college, and, indeed, in some cases may have taken their job because it was to be associated with this scheme of vocational preparation. Their previous academic attainments[4] will also vary greatly, as will their general social adjustment and prospects at work. Thus, some will be released by employers because they are thought to have problems, others because they are thought to have potential. Means of coping with this variation within and between groups will derive from not only the nature of the programme and the materials and methods employed in it, but also the means by which the programme is designed.

It remains true, of course, that many of the participants will be of below-average ability (some will have specific problems) and that many of them will have a low level of academic attainment. These two factors may or may not be related. It may also be the case that they possess capabilities which were not evident in the school environment and a potential for being better motivated at their present more mature age and in their new circumstances. Whether they are excited or apprehensive about work, satisfied or disillusioned, it is likely to be a matter of central concern to them.

What most of them do have in common is that they have recently started work. Even here, a few will have worked for a year or so, most a month or so, and in some cases the work will be temporary in the sense that it will be part of a Government financed work experience scheme.

Unemployed young people on "Work Experience Programmes'[5][6] are included in order to 'top up' some schemes, and some schemes have been set up especially for them. They, too, are at work for the first time, although the employer is not the one paying them, and in this respect the 'concept' of UVP is as applicable to them as to the fully-employed. Many tutors report that these young people see **themselves** as 'employed', which means that their motivation may be similar to that of other participants. On the other hand, any company-based induction and on-the-job training may have less long term relevance, and the curriculum will need to emphasise job-seeking skills and other abilities – the need for which may have to be predicted. It may also be necessary for tutors to emphasise that the scheme is not a solution in itself, that they must go on looking for a permanent job, and to discuss with them the national and local background to their unemployment. Another danger is that unemployed participants may be unduly tolerant of a scheme's inadequacies if they believe, however mistakenly, that it guarantees them a job at the end. The subsequent disillusionment can be severe, and can sour their attitude towards future education and training.

Notes

new status
and responsibilities

education in
parallel with
experience

[1] One college scheme symbolises this by labelling some sessions by the tutor's name rather than by subject. The scheme takes a problem tackling approach, and although some tutors are a better resource in some areas rather than others, and the students soon become aware of this, 'subjects' do not appear on the timetable.

adult relationships

sense of importance

Why might UVP succeed in cases where the student's previous full-time education has not?

Four reasons are most commonly given

(i) The young person now has a different status and responsibilities and may therefore recognise new needs or accept old ones. He or she is a worker and a wage earner and therefore probably also has a different relationship to family and colleagues than previously.

(ii) In any **pre**-employment course teachers or instructors have, inevitably, to provide answers to questions which the participants have not yet got. They have therefore to persuade the young people of the problems to be expected as well as to teach them appropriate solutions. Properly organised UVP schemes can take advantage of the fact that the tutor and others can be seen as a **resource** in their search for answers.[1] Similarly, when any input can be concurrent with experience, numeracy (say) can be perceived as a potential tool in the solution of problems, as opposed to the subject of maths appearing to be a problem in itself.

(iii) A recurring factor said to contribute to the success of the college part of schemes is the establishment of effective adult relationships between staff and students, and the students themselves. However, this may be seen not just as a matter of being informal or friendly, but as a direct consequence of acting on point (ii) above. If the students are accepted as equal participants in a dialogue about their needs and the best way to satisfy them, with people who genuinely care for their wellbeing both personally and vocationally, then the desired relationship will almost certainly develop.

(iv) The participants are made to feel special. At the moment, this may be merely a product of the fact that they are part of an experimental pilot programme, and therefore receive a lot of attention from important people (at work, in college and from other agencies) who value their opinion of the scheme. They are probably coming into contact with some of the institutions' best tutors and facilities, and this may well contrast with their previous experience. However, there are ways in which some of these beneficial processes can and should become a permanent part of the programme. It is argued later that a careful consideration of each young person's role and experience as a worker and a learner by both employer and teacher is a crucial part of the curriculum process. It is also suggested that participants should always have means of commenting on and influencing the programme. Staff and facilities are discussed in later sections, but it is obvious that even after the pilot stage it is very important for these youngsters that they come into contact with skilled staff who are well motivated towards teaching **them**, and that they benefit from as good facilities as anyone else.

Notes

employer
+
college

[1] Two Field Organisers have been appointed to assist in the setting up of UVP Schemes.
They are Mrs Barbara Paterson and Mr George Ward and may be contacted at DES, Elizabeth House, York Road, London SE1 7PH. Tel. 01-928-9222 ext 3168 or 3597.

value of intermediary agencies or go-betweens

discussing the concept.
making decisions.
establishing liaison.

[2] Colleges often report difficulty in obtaining access to the key people in a company. For instance, a training officer may be interested to talk and may become committed to a scheme, but the production manager may be the one who finds it 'impossible' to release an operative. In some cases the decision makers are elsewhere in the country.

[3] Some ITBs have a positive interest in this area, as a matter of policy. Others, as yet, do not. The quality of local contacts and relationships also varies, naturally.

[4] Once again, much will depend, of course, on local policy and personalities.

"induction" of the organisations involved.

approaching employers
discussion of young workers rather than courses.

[5] The minimal level of 'unification' might be college staff getting to know what the individual student's jobs are like, and the employer considering the company and college facilities for learning.
There is a need to get both the employees' and employers' view of the job, of course.

For the sake of simplicity, **one** employer is being assumed. The whole process obviously gets more complex and time consuming when several are involved, but is perhaps even more important. This is referred to again in the section on 'composition of groups'. (Section 15.)

Programme design

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED, AND AT WHAT STAGE ?

Even where the UVP scheme is taking place entirely away from the place of work, it must relate to and be conducted in the knowledge of the young people's work experience. Where the scheme has components implemented by both the employer and an external agency (such as an FE college), it is important that the components relate and refer to each other, so that they make an integrated whole.

It follows that **the college (say) and the employer must both be involved in the design of the programme**. 'Intermediary agencies' such as an ITB, local FE advisors, Field Organisers[1] or HM Inspectorate can have a crucial role as catalysts.

Three kinds of contact are necessary. Initially, discussions must take place in general terms about the concept of UVP, the various perceptions of the young workers' needs, and possible outlines of a suitable scheme. At some point, decisions have to be taken by the employer to allow the young people to participate and by the college to commit its resources. Ideally, once this has been done, those who are going to teach the participants should be put in contact with the supervisors responsible for them at work.

In a small concern, such as a local shop, one individual may be supervisor, training officer, and decision maker. In more complex organisations, the appropriate individuals may be more difficult to identify, or even if clearly labelled may be difficult to contact.[2]

In any case, firms may require several approaches spread over a period of time if the concept is to be understood and acted upon. Some Industrial Training Boards have the appropriate knowledge, contacts and personnel for this task.[3]

Conversely, when a possible group of participants has been identified, perhaps by an ITB or the firm itself, it may not be immediately apparent either what the particular needs of these young workers are or, therefore, what function can be performed by what part of the local education or youth service. Here, an LEA advisor (for instance) can initiate the discussion until a point is reached when the kind of provision necessary has been identified.[4]

In other words, where the firm and/or the college have not previously given much thought to the education and training of such young people, negotiations may have to take place through an intermediary agency in order to 'induct' the organisations into the issues at the right pace, and to identify the appropriate key personnel on each side.

It is most common for the initiative to come from an 'external agency'. It has often been found that it is more effective for (college) representatives to approach an employer in an attempt to engage him in a general discussion about what he requires of the young people, what problems he finds, their personal and career needs and how these might be met – rather than to attempt to sell him a new 'course'.[5]

Notes

employers' responses.

employer – involvement in planning.

influencing curricula.

organised work experience

need for induction.

traditions of training.

Some employers may have a social conscience about the fact that the needs of many of their younger employees are not being met, or be worried by the fact that some employees get further education and training whereas others do not. Others will have to be convinced that there is some benefit to be gained by the company from a UVP scheme. An important argument here is that human skills are as important as technical ones in the effective running of a company, and that these young workers may have the greatest need in this respect as they move from a school to a work environment, acquiring new roles, meeting a wider range of people and situations. Employers may be well aware of the symptoms displayed by young workers finding the transition difficult, but find difficulty in knowing what support is appropriate, or have difficulty in providing it. Some may argue that the schools should have provided the missing skills, knowledge and orientation. An important argument here is that for many of these young people education in parallel with experience (experience which demonstrates need and gives opportunity for immediate application) is more appropriate and effective than preparatory learning (which can become 'just another lesson' aimed at needs predicted by their teachers). Also, some seeds planted at school need more time and a different environment in which to grow.

Employers will also vary as to how much they want to be involved in discussions on method and content. It is obvious that they must be sympathetic to the UVP concept and have some faith that it can be effected before they will make arrangements for the young person to participate. However, more than this is required. Their knowledge of the young people, the jobs they do and their relationships to the work of the company is essential in order for an effective programme to be planned. A few firms will be happiest when they are presented with a package which requires nothing more than a decision to release their employee. Others will take part only on condition that they are **not** presented with a pre-planned package, and will insist on having a hand in the devising of the programme and a continuing interest in its progress and implementation. At its best, the latter situation gives more opportunity for a good, unified scheme. Firms in the former category should be made aware that they are in a position where, for once, there is a possibility of local influence on the FE curriculum, and that, additionally, they may be in a position to organise a young person's work experience in such a way as to provide a more constructive learning experience and/or to provide more fruitful 'material' upon which the external agency could work. Also, without proper induction (in-company and more generally) the young workers may feel that no one cares what they do, how well they do it, or how they should develop. Commitment to the job, and interest in the wider function and success of the enterprise, are therefore unlikely to develop.

It may be important to take account of the tradition of training and pattern of recruitment in the industry concerned. Some firms will be used to sending their skilled employees to a further education college, but may therefore be looking for similar provision, or not see the point of it for these workers on the assumption that it will be similar. Others may not be in the habit of regarding the activity of colleges as having relevance to the performance of their company, but may, on the other hand, be prepared to be more open minded about the nature of provision and regard the proof of the pudding as being in the eating.

Notes

[1] If the fact that UVP work is of a lowly 'grade' results in such a co-ordinator having a lowly official status, the backing of the Principal or Vice Principal may be needed.

approaching colleges

terms of curricular discussion.

involving the young people

Steering Committee.

[2] Given the range of agencies which could be involved with UVP, it may be worth expanding on this collection of initials.

HMI = Her Majesty's Inspectorate

TSA = Training Services Agency, now renamed the Training Services Division of the Manpower Services Commission.

LEA = Local Education Authority

ITBs = Industrial Training Boards

RACs = Regional Advisory Councils

curriculum Committee.

There can be difficulty for outsiders in finding their way around college organisations. The most appropriate departments or members of staff are not always easy to identify, and departmental divisions may result in it being difficult to discuss the college provision as a whole or to ensure that its component parts are co-ordinated and controlled. A team co-ordinator,[1] with the time and structure in which to be effective, is obviously essential. Apart from its effect on the students, outside agencies find the lack of such a link very difficult to understand.

The terms in which the discussions are conducted can be important, and although, of course, there can be no perfect answer to this, a promising format is to talk in terms of the processes by which it is anticipated that the young people will learn, together with a description of the learning outcomes expected. This approach not only reflects the philosophy argued in more detail later, but seems the one most likely to make sense to the various parties involved.

To sum up the argument of this section so far, one might say that employers should recognise the young person's status as a 'learner' whilst at work, and teachers should recognise the significance of the young person's status and experience as a worker while he or she is at college.

It is also highly desirable that potential participants should themselves be involved in the debate. It may be possible for there to be preliminary group talks. In any case, account should be taken of their previous experiences, and there should be an induction period at the start of the programme where its format and intention should be explained to them, and opportunity given for them to comment, at least, on both.

A broadly-based Steering Committee is, of course, required to over-see the operation of each of the schemes. The general view seems to be that the Steering Committee, composed as it is of representatives of the implementing agencies involved, local employers and unions, HMI and TSA – and the LEA, Careers Service, ITBs and RACs where appropriate –[2] is more suitable for this general planning and monitoring, than for detailed programme design. The latter may be best undertaken by a special curriculum sub-group, whose membership may extend beyond that of the Steering Committee itself, to include those teachers, supervisors, union officials, and so on in direct contact with the young people and responsible for their learning.

Notes

[1] Wherever the scheme is based and whoever is responsible for it. This section is not meant to refer only to the college-based components of schemes.

'programmed' learning.

'participative' learning.

What approach to learning activities and teaching methods is appropriate? [1]

Specific learning activities need to be related to the nature of the learning objectives, and this is considered in Section 8. However, another area of debate is the **general** approach to learning adopted by the scheme as a whole.

For the sake of argument we may postulate two clear alternatives.

(a) A programme the content of which has been carefully derived from an analysis of the participant's personal, social and vocational needs and which is implemented by the tutors in such a controlled, phased and organised way that the student is almost certain to learn, and can be aware of the fact. By this method, motivation is generated by immediate 'success' and the avoidance of failure.

However this approach has rarely been chosen as the basic or general one for a UVP scheme, probably because it has a fundamental draw-back.

Apart from the requirement for the young person to place himself entirely in the hands of his tutor, and thus tend to develop a relationship of dependency. it confirms him or her in the conviction that learning is a process organised by 'someone who knows better'. It does not help the young person to learn how to learn from his or her own unorganised experience.

This is not to say 'programmed' learning does not have its place as part of a UVP scheme – particularly perhaps where a participant wishes to acquire some specific knowledge or to develop a particular skill. (See section 6.)

(b) The other approach starts from the experience of young people, experience undergone fortuitously or organised as part of the programme. It then depends upon the young person identifying and accepting a need to learn. Variations of this process are described variously by UVP tutors as 'problem solving', 'participative learning', 'task or student centred learning', etc. All of these do, of course, reflect a slightly different approach.

Mechanisms by which this approach are implemented include:

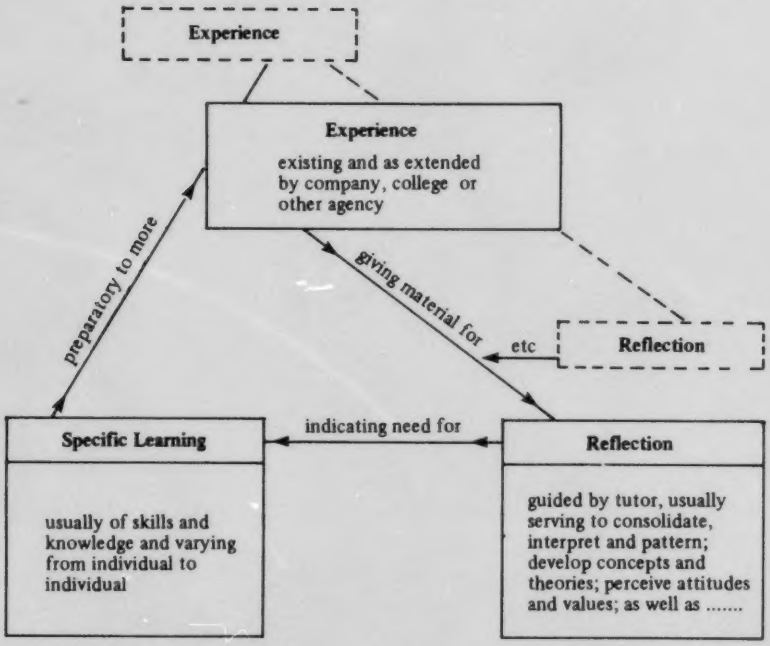
- skilfully-led discussions which enable participants to recognise and consolidate what experience has 'taught' them, and also lead them to identify what else they need to learn or practice.
- project work derived from their current experience.
- games and simulations designed to provide opportunities for predictable learning outcomes.
- the teaching of specific problem-tackling techniques which can be applied to a range of situations.

The difficulty with this approach is ensuring that important areas of learning are not omitted, that the right balance is struck between these areas, and that each area is learned as effectively as possible.

It is hoped that the model described in the next section may help show a relationship between these approaches and how to make use of their differing strengths.

Curriculum design

Notes


Experience
Experience
existing and as extended by company, college or other agency
preparatory to more
giving material for
etc
Reflection
indicating need for
Specific Learning
usually of skills and knowledge and varying from individual to individual
Reflection
guided by tutor, usually serving to consolidate, interpret and pattern; develop concepts and theories; perceive attitudes and values; as well as .....

This model is not meant to describe an 'ideal format' – though it might be possible to devise a scheme by using it, or to analyse an existing one.

Thus it does not follow that the three activities or phases outlined should necessarily become separate sequential elements in a scheme. All three elements might well be present in one 'session'.

Each of the activities could take place in a **variety** of contexts – at work, in college, in a youth centre, for instance.

To some extent the process may occur naturally outside the curriculum, in the sense that it is not planned or facilitated by scheme organisers.

The learning process – suggested model

The following idealised model of the learning process is offered in the hope that:

(a) it will give a framework in which to consider the examples of existing approaches which will be described later;

(b) it may give organisers of new schemes some indication as to what decisions need to be made by them in the light of their local knowledge and circumstances.

This particular model has been chosen because it embodies the principles that:

(i) the process should be focussed on the young person's current experience
and
(ii) the young person's developing adulthood is recognised by according him or her some responsibility for what is to be learned, and how,
and
(iii) the learning can take place in a variety of contexts under the aegis of a variety of agencies.

It is suggested that the learning process should be considered as being in three phases. The individual's **experience** needs to be followed by some organised **reflection**. This reflection enables the individual to learn from the experience, but also helps identify any need for some **specific learning** before further experience is acquired.

This is expressed diagramatically on the facing page.

Notes

extending experience.

[1] Schemes extend experience by three basic means:
further **direct experience**, such as job rotation, visits, residential periods, etc.

indirect experience, meaning the use of device such as role-play or simulations which enable the participants to experience **themselves** in new situations.

vicarious experience – being put, in imagination, in someone **else's** shoes, usually through the medium of a book, film or play.

need for educational decisions.

[2] However, the choice of method can be one of educational principle, on occasion. A simulation may be chosen for its own intrinsic value in that it encourages group co-operation (for instance). Similarly, some tutors will choose to use TV (say) not only because it provides a given experience or information, but also because they wish to help young people to handle this medium, with which, after all, they are likely to have a lot of contact.

To give another example: some tutors have decided not to use fiction on purely pragmatic grounds, such as the lack of suitable material or hostility from the students. Others have simply not considered it. Yet others are determined to use fiction at some point, if at all possible, on the grounds that familiarity with metaphor and imagery is important educationally.

preliminary learning ?

[3] Thus it may (for example) be necessary to define various workers' jobs in order that the young people can make any sense of what they have seen happening at the workplace. On the other hand, they may be able to work all this out for themselves, with help, and they may find it off-putting to be given definitions.

EXPERIENCE

Some participants may be working in jobs and living in communities which provide virtually all the necessary 'raw material'.

However, most would benefit from some extension or phasing of their experience at work – for example, by the introduction of some job-rotation or by being given the opportunity to see other aspects of their firm's work and to meet other employees outside their normal orbit. Many will require their existing experience to be augmented by agencies such as an FE college,[1] either by such means as visits or workshop practice or by the reproduction of some situations in the simplified or more controlled context of a game, simulation or role play. A residential period can extend an individual's social experience as well as providing opportunities in other areas that are not available either at work or at college. (See section 13.) The decision as to **how** to extend an individual's experience may be a practical one contingent upon local circumstances.[2] The decision as to **whether** to extend an individual's experience, and in what direction, requires value judgements the basis of which will be discussed in a later section.

However, it is a truism that we don't necessarily learn from our experiences. Uncomfortable ones can be forgotten and henceforth avoided, patterns and relationships may not be perceived – hence the need for appropriately supported reflection.

It is also possible that a young person may lack the knowledge or degree of cognitive skill required to reflect on his or her experience most fruitfully or constructively. Here the tutor or tutors will have to make careful professional judgements as to what learning is a prerequisite for proper reflection.[3] It should be borne in mind that only the student is ultimately in a position to know whether what is being learned is helping him or her to interpret the experience. Therefore, at this stage, this is the criterion on which the value or otherwise of the teaching should be judged. The student's recognition of this, together with trust in the teacher, will be very important in cases where the individual's previous experience of 'being taught' has not been happy.

In many cases no taught 'input' will be required before the enabling skills described overleaf can be used to help reflection.

Notes

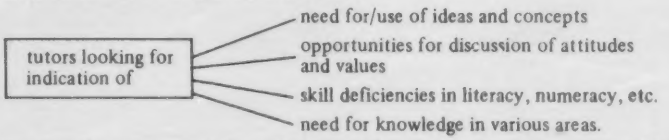
tutors' enabling role

[1] Some tutors find that initial discussion of an artificial situation is less threatening and avoids an undue confusion of issues. They are then able to lead in to discussion of actual experience.

some strategies

developing concepts, generalisations; perceiving relationships. identifying learning needs.

[2] Diagramatically, one might say that we have


tutors looking for indication of
need for/use of ideas and concepts
opportunities for discussion of attitudes and values
skill deficiencies in literacy, numeracy, etc.
need for knowledge in various areas.

For instance, a group may be considering a dispute over the manufacture of faulty parts. This could be used to extend thinking on to the general idea of how materials can be joined together, or to investigate how the **roles** of those involved affected how the dispute was handled, or to develop economic literacy through a consideration of scarcity and **value**, or political literacy, or to develop the scientific concept of **stress**, or to give cause for this practice of **verbal communication** via a report or **visual communication** via a diagram, and so on and so on.

Not all these areas will be investigated at the same time, or at all. Nevertheless, it would seem wise for the tutor-team to be aware of the basic core-concepts they wish to develop (however few and to whatever limited extent). Similarly, they will have to have predicted and prepared facilities for the learning of specific skills and knowledge.

a check list

[3] This ensures coverage in the traditional way by giving each 'subject' one hour per week. It can also seem incoherent and lacking in meaning to those on the receiving end.

REFLECTION

This can be very effectively undertaken in a group. The tutor's role is very much an enabling one. He or she would hope to elicit ideas, perceptions and views from the young people, and also to enable them to learn from other participants. Techniques such as the use of stimulus material, questionnaires, problem tackling strategies, and games can all help here[1] if necessary. However, skilful questioning, group leadership and above all good listening remain the basic tutor requirements.

As well as crystallising and reinforcing previous learning, and promoting the development of concepts and generalisations which will influence their perception of future experience, this stage should help the individual and tutor identify what further specific learning is necessary.[2] Any given experience could, doubtless, give rise to a range of learning opportunities. However, no one group or tutor is going to spot all the possibilities, and, indeed, they may fortuitously pursue some desirable avenues at the expense of some more essential ones. It may be, therefore, that a tutor, or a team of tutors should compile a check list of what particular areas of learning are going to be especially watched for, and what 'signals' indicate particular insights or needs. This can be particularly important when only a very few tutors are involved with the group, and can avoid the necessity of using a larger team simply to ensure that each area is given due attention (by having a teacher for each).[3]

The compilation of such a check list and/or the selection of a 'balanced team' is another way of saying that value judgements need to be made, once again, about the range of learning objectives which are to be aimed for.

Notes

resource-centred learning

[1] The fact that much of the learning in this phase is likely to be either skill or knowledge acquisition, means that it may be possible to use various kinds of programmed learning. For example, a text may be available for students to work through if they need help in (say) the calculating of percentages. This will only be effective, of course, where the student is well motivated, having previously accepted his need to learn, and anticipating future benefits. There will be some cases where a student will need individual attention – particularly when there is a basic deficiency, or when work-cards etc are not appropriate for the student and/or the subject.

flexible organisation

use of projects

[2] Perhaps individually designed for each student around his particular needs and job, structured so as to enable him to acquire skill, knowledge etc at the right pace and level, and using the range of physical and human resources available in the college, community and place of work. For instance, local libraries, shopkeepers, trades unionists, supervisors at work can all be sources of individual assistance.

use of a range of people and facilities

SPECIFIC LEARNING

This will usually take the form of particular skills to be practiced or learned, and particular information to be acquired. It is very likely that individuals will vary greatly with respect to both what they need to learn and how they might best learn it. It is here that the greatest strain is likely to be placed upon the resources of the FE college or other agency. Three approaches can help.

1. The development of the resource-based learning which enables learners individually or in very small groups to be engated in different activities at the same time. This is, of course, an approach already well developed in technical and communications 'workshops', and in some company training centres.[1]

2. A college organisation which is flexible enough to allow students to join other groups for particular activities at certain times of the week.

3. The skilled use of well structured projects, in conjunction with adequate resources, which may be in the college and company and elsewhere.[2]

4. An awareness that specific learning can take place at work, though stimulated at college, and vice-versa; and that in either context other workers, other students and people in the community can be informal tutors (if they perceive their role appropriately and the learners are enabled to see and use them as a resource).

Notes

[1] Usually college-based ones.

[2] Thus conventional subject labels are rarely used.
"It need not be narrowly focussed on a specific job, but its content must be so selected and shaped that its vocational utility is clear". HMI Report on Curricula for Non-Participant 16–19s.

vocationally relevant content

[3] For instance, a discussion about bonus schemes and overtime rates leading into consideration of proportion and percentages.

group-work

[4] Employer/employee; customer/worker; parent/child, most commonly.

[5] Experiences of various roles, including leadership, and of various kinds of group organisation and co-operative activity, can also be given.

[6] In some areas shop assistants (for instance) are recruited on the basis of their possession of basic word and number skills.

[7] Also, this approach does not require access to the full facilities of an FE college.

Existing approaches

For the sake of clarity and emphasis, the following descriptions are caricatures of existing schemes, many of which, of course, adopt a combination of these approaches.

1. Some schemes[1] are presented in the form of a number of content areas timetabled in the conventional way. These areas are usually chosen so as to be of 'demonstrable relevance' to the students.[2] Where a careful appraisal of the student's circumstances has taken place, with the result that the teachers have chosen the right content areas and are able to start from the student's present position, then the students may be well motivated. The strength of this approach is that teachers are able to organise their material and plan the learning carefully and in such a way as to give the students early success, and avoid failure. Although it apparently omits the second phase of the model, it is frequently the case that good teachers prepare the ground for each lesson by a consideration of the student's experience and an explanation of the relevance of the rest of the lesson to it.[3] The weakness of the approach is that although the teacher's interpretation of what is 'relevant' may be basically correct, it may not be complete or reflect the right emphases as far as the student is concerned. Further, it does not necessarily lead to autonomy on the part of the student – autonomy in the sense that he is enabled to learn from his own future experience by developing a knowledge of and a responsibility for his own learning processes. Appropriately 'inductive' teaching strategies can remove these disadvantages. A large proportion of exposition, however skilful, would not.

It does ensure that those areas of content deemed to be important are properly covered, but may depend upon students who have not learned to mistrust teachers or reject a process they recognise as 'being taught'.

2. Another approach emphasises the experience – reflection dimension. The experience used may be a combination of the student's every-day life at work and in the community, together with some games or simulations which serve either to extend the experience or, more often, to simplify and highlight events as an aid to more effective learning.

The approach usually concentrates on group work, and can be very effective in promoting the abilities to see a situation from several points of view,[4] to move from intuition to an understanding of behaviour, to work with other people and learn from them, and so on.[5] Although group work can lead to exercises that require specific numeracy or verbal skills, it is not usually good at remedying basic skill deficiencies in individuals. For example, working as a group may mean that an individual who cannot do long division is not allocated tasks that require it. Thus, this approach may be a valid choice where there are no basic inabilities or major variations in ability between group members,[6] and if it has been decided that, in the time available, general awareness and understanding is to be given priority over more specific learning.[7]

Notes

[1] But there can be some tension if the subsequent in-firm activities do not take the opportunity to use abilities developed by the scheme.

simulation of the work-place

[2] More particularly, by making the young people responsible for the planning and implementation of the process as a whole.

project-work

[3] For instance project work could be narrowly defined as the production of a written folder **about** an activity. Other media are also possible (photographs, diagrams, tapes) and a 'product' such as a piece of equipment, or a window display, or a transaction such as selling or negotiating is conceivable. See also section on assessment.

[4] This is usually a resource-based approach, with materials jointly devised by technical and general-subject teachers, and possibly adapting some made available from employers.

communication workshops

[5] Though individualised learning caters for variation in need and ability, it may cause neglect of group work.

3. Another approach uses the job itself as a vehicle for the scheme, reproducing working conditions off-site. This is usually adopted on a block release basis as a substitute for an in-firm training programme.[1] Although the process **could** be one of narrow technical instruction, in the hands of skilful and imaginative teachers, all three phases of the model could be implemented within it, and a wide range of objectives aimed at. For instance, appropriate organisation of the work[2] can raise the need for group decision making, calculation of material costs and work rates, a discussion of reward and job satisfaction in general, etc.

4. For some schemes the vehicle is a method, such as project work or problem-solving.

In both cases all three phases of the model **could** be fully represented. However, if the problems or projects are selected and defined only by the tutor and/or the employer then the 'reflection' phase is neglected. (Often causing motivation problems if the issue is not a 'real' one to the young people – not identified, accepted or 'internalised'.) Similarly, particular interpretations of what method of project work is appropriate may cause emphasis or neglect of some specific learning.[3]

5. Some schemes will emphasise the acquisition of basic 'educational' skills such as literacy, numeracy, and the ability to learn in general.[4] This is obviously viable where all concerned, including of course the young people, regard it as evident that particular types of learning are required. The young person's experience is usually taken account of by the use of material arising from his every day life. Although the 'counselling' function of the 'reflection' phase is apparently omitted, many teachers would regard this as a natural part of their classroom or workshop activity.[5]

Notes

definition of curriculum

definition of objective

[1] For instance, the student might, with respect to his own place of work:

(a) be able to list a given number of a shop steward's functions;

(b) be able to describe his average week's activities;

(c) be able to select from a list which problems should be taken to him.

2 out of 3 of these might provide sufficient evidence of the required 'understanding'. None of them are that understanding.

3 processes involved

Curriculum objectives

A thread running through the previous section has been the issue of the determination of the nature and extent of the objectives of the scheme. However, before embarking upon this topic, it may be wise to comment on our usage of two crucial terms.

The term **curriculum** is meant to cover any activity which has been planned in order to promote learning. The triangular model described earlier is meant to imply that any of the three suggested 'phases' could be planned by a variety of agencies and implemented in more than one context. It is, therefore, meant to include more than simply what is implemented by 'teachers' in 'classrooms'.

Objective is used here to mean what the tutor or scheme organisers intend the young people to have acquired or understood. It is not necessarily meant to imply a description in terms of student behaviour. It seems more sensible to regard behaviour as an **indicator** of what learning has taken place. Thus, if the objective is that a young worker should have understood the function of a shop steward, a variety of indicators may show that the desired learning outcome has actually been achieved.[1]

When considering the objectives of a UVP curriculum, it might be helpful to view them under three headings.

(i) The process by which the objectives are to be derived.

(ii) The process by which the derived objectives can be checked for balance and completeness.

(iii) The process by which they are to be analysed in order to decide on appropriate learning activities and therefore teaching methods.

Notes

co-ordinating
differing
perspectives

learning for
present 'needs'

need for
framework

vocational needs,
and interest as
vehicle not
determinant

(i) DERIVATION OF OBJECTIVES

It has been suggested earlier that in the case of UVP this is a joint activity involving employers, colleges or similar agencies, and, in some cases, an intermediary agency, such as an ITB, local FE advisers, or HM Inspectorate. The principle is that these differing perspectives should be brought to bear on the same phenomenon – that is, the young person's transition from school to work and the learning that this demands of and makes possible for the individual. It will require observation of the young person's work experience and an estimation of present and future needs. One might label this a 'situation analysis'.

There is no doubt that priority must be given to that learning required to make a success of the activities that the individual is at present engaged in. This apparently trite point is made because it emphasises the need for tutors to be aware of these activities, and to avoid a tendency that many educationalists are said to have, namely, preparing people to engage in future activities at the expense of helping them to improve in their present ones.

Even if it were to be accepted that the young workers' present vocational needs were to be a **determinant** of the scheme's objectives, in the sense of their being limited in this way, then we would still have to face the possibility that any task or situational analysis would reflect the background and training of those undertaking it – resulting in unintentional imbalance and omissions. It would therefore be wise to do the analysis within a framework designed to mitigate this tendency. Some sample approaches are described below.

However, it is surely not ethically or educationally acceptable to use the fact that an individual may be in an undemanding and possibly unsatisfying job as a reason for limiting his or her learning opportunities. (This is not to say that personally irrelevant or inappropriately complex outcomes should be aimed for.)

It is on these grounds that most schemes aim to extend the participants' experience and horizons and to use vocational needs and interests as a **vehicle** for the achievement of objectives relevant to their present and future activities as adults and in society generally. Here more than a situational analysis is required. The choices made reflect some view of society, the individual, or culture, or whatever. In other words, we are talking about what rights and responsibilities we have to educate and be educated.

This delicate area is debated, briefly, in section (ii) below.

Notes

first framework
job skills
work skills
social and life skills

[1] There may not be the level of supervision available in the work place to enable a learner to practice safely.

[2] One scheme does insist on the worker trying at least two types of job during the work-experience component (often involving different manual as well as other skills). Another relates a physical education component to the need to lift and move objects easily and without injury. A third uses the various workshop, craft and art facilities in the college to give students experience of various manual operations which are not necessarily specifically related to their jobs.

[3] In one scheme, many of the objectives concerned with such things as knowledge of the organisational structure of the industry, the ability to work well in a group, the ability to work with numbers and words, etc. are approached through the use of a simplified business game which occupies more than fifty per cent of the off-site time and may last for as long as twelve weeks. This will obviously make great demands on the teacher in terms of enabling skills, range of expertise and experience of the relevant business world but can, equally obviously, be an excellent motivator and unifying device.

[4] See, for instance, 'Mechanical Trades Principles' (a Tradec course) Yorkshire and Humberside Council for Further Education.

Frameworks for derivation

Most suggested frameworks advocate looking at the 'period of transition' under various headings.

(a) One such system is to consider the young workers' needs under three headings. These are, 'job skills', 'work skills', and 'social and life skills'. This is a common approach in one form or another, so it may be worth amplifying each of these terms.

'Job-skills' are those capabilities which the young person needs in order to undertake the particular task to which he has been allocated at work. Some firms already have programmes and facilities for teaching these, and may therefore wish to cater for this part of the curriculum themselves. Indeed, they may have their own special procedures and equipment with which their young workers need to be familiar, and the college may not have appropriate facilities or expertise.

In other cases the college may be better equipped to enable the young person to acquire certain specific job skills efficiently and under controlled conditions.[1]

In most cases this element is not considered part of the UVP scheme for accounting purposes (of time or money) since it would have been provided in any case. It does need to be considered for curricular purposes, of course. However, extension of this area is possible. The firm may provide for job rotation or experience of other departments. A training centre or college may enable people to try a range of simple manual skills[2] so that they can become aware of both the kinds of operation they find amenable and their preferred 'learning style'. Background information about the company, the industry of which it is part, its product and customers may also be provided. This can occur in college with company help or through an organised induction programme on site. This area is not meant to be interpreted as 'theory' in a conventional sense. The young worker is, rather, being helped to understand (for example) the material with which he is working, his role in the process by which it is manufactured, and its function within the community. This merges with a consideration of more general 'work skills'.[3]

Work Skills. These are not company specific, though consideration of them may be introduced via the young person's knowledge of his own place of work. They are the general skills and capacities needed in the world of work as a whole, including such things as relating to supervisors and colleagues, understanding methods of organising production and the financing of it, interpreting pay slips and tax codings, or negotiating a day off. Topics would include trade unions, consumer legislation, customer relations, health and safety, systems of reward, rates of pay and budgeting, and so on. In some cases it will be possible to identify basic technological concepts common to the work of all the participants.[4]

Some of the above areas may be seen as part of more general 'social and life skills'.

Notes

[1] requiring practice, therefore

[2] such as the concept of audience, and appropriate style

[3] usually approached through group-work and activities.

[4] "and the assumption that the only job skills (needed) are manipulative". HMI Report on curricula for non-participant 16–19s.

interpretation of 'skill'.

[5] The uses of the word 'skill' in each of the above headings can be misleading in so far as it implies that all the objectives are skills in the conventional sense. That is, it is not wise to deduce from this terminology anything about how they should be learned or taught. (See section (iii) below).

danger of 'additive approach

It is not even completely accurate to regard the headings as descriptive of groups of objectives. This is because something like an 'ability to comprehend instructions' or to 'calculate percentages' could occur in any of the areas. though its context and application would obviously vary. The best way to regard the headings might be as descriptive of the contexts in which the young person's needs, wants, etc. should be considered.

second framework

Thus it does not necessarily follow that the areas should be 'taught' in discrete sessions. A given student activity may give rise to opportunities for learning in each of the areas. Some scheme organisers have chosen to label sessions using these terms, which ensures that attention is paid to each area but could, in unfavourable circumstances, encourage tutors in one area to neglect their responsibility to others. Equally, young people should not be given the impression that the areas exist as discrete entities in the real world. It is, of course, possible to give a tutor a primary responsibility for ensuring that a given area is effectively dealt with whenever appropriate in the scheme, without allocating him or her a session labelled accordingly.

induction

occupational tasks

personal skills

[6] If 'social and life skills' (in particular) comes to be taught completely additively as an extra 'subject', the very fruitful opportunities for contributing to this area which occur elsewhere in the scheme may be missed, and some fear that whatever its basic virtues may be, the area may not be seen as 'relevant' by employers or participants. (On the other hand, some employers have never before considered the possibility that this area could be taught, and are intrigued by the possibility.) None of this is to deny that particular teaching skills are required, or that some sessions are needed which have 'social and life skills' as their major objective.

Social and Life Skills. The interpretation of this varies from those who regard it as a series of language, number and practical skills needed in everyday life[1] via those who adopt a wider definition of 'communication skills' which would extend to include many factors which affect the effectiveness of interchange,[2] to those who (despite the title) see that area in terms of the development of self-confidence, a coherent and realistic self image, awareness of the roles and authority of others, and so on.[3]

This variation is partly due to the boundaries between earlier categories being drawn in different places.

A strength of this approach is that it avoids the 'thoughtless equation of vocational and practical'.[4] It also gives a basis for discussion with employers who have neglected provision for these workers because of the limited requirement for 'job skills'.

A weakness is the perhaps misleadingly loose usage of the word 'skill'[5] and a possible tendency to encourage the creation of three new 'subjects'[6]

(b) A second approach categorizes the functions of UVP slightly differently. These functions are:

to help young people through the transition from school to work – **induction**; enabling them to acquire the necessary skills and background knowledge so as to be able to undertake their **occupational tasks** successfully; and the developing of their **personal skills**, of which literacy and numeracy are usually considered the most central.

This approach has the advantage of using terms familiar to employers, and likely to emphasise their role in the programme. However, care must be taken that the terms are not interpreted too narrowly: induction should be to the world of work and not just to a specific job, and occupational tasks may require a greater range of abilities than conventionally supposed. It might also be too easy to allocate the areas to the training officer, supervisor and FE teacher respectively. Each may, in fact, have a contribution to make under each heading.

Notes

third framework
in the company
in social groups
in the community

advantages of a common framework

issue of balance remains

(c) A third rationale considers the individuals in three contexts, namely the **company**, their personal activities and **social groups**, and as citizens in the **wider community**. Priority is given to the learning of skills, knowledge etc. which enable the individuals to satisfy their immediate needs and wants in these areas (which overlap, of course). Without neglecting these first order objectives, the intention could then be to work outwards towards wider considerations as far as is feasible given restraints of time, student ability, and interest.

This is a useful rationale as long as the inter-relatedness of the areas is recognised, and the labels do not lead the employer to feel that his requirements are being neglected. There may also be a tendency to see everything in terms of certain kinds of 'group-skills', and to omit more individualistic ones.

The adoption of one of these approaches, or other similar ones, at least ensures that the problem of deriving appropriate objectives is seen from more than one point of view. What they hope to avoid is the production of schemes made up additively of the 'employer's view' plus the 'college view', or of 'training' plus 'education'. In other words, all those concerned should be able to discuss the scheme within the **same** framework.

This does, of course, leave the issue of balance between the labelled areas unresolved. It cannot be inferred that each area should always receive equal emphasis. In the end it must come down to a matter of human judgement – but thought should be given as to how those who know the young people in various contexts, and indeed the young people themselves, can be involved in negotiations which lead to final determination of the objectives.

Notes

practical analysis versus general principles

reasons for mismatch between ideal model and reality

[1] As young adults they have, ultimately, the right to determine their own 'balance', and their choice of job may reflect such a choice. It may be the duty of the scheme to provide them with certain opportunities, but participants retain the right not to avail themselves of them.

dangers of pre-judging the participants

methods checking

(ii) CHECKING THE OBJECTIVES

By whatever process the objectives are derived, and whatever system of headings is used to organise this process, it remains necessary to compare the set of objectives arrived at, by the practical, contingent route, against an abstract view, derived from general principles, of what learning opportunities should be provided for young people of this age in our society. Then, if any major areas appear to be under-emphasised or lacking altogether, there will be grounds for further enquiry.

This may seem a lofty ideal, and 'all very well in theory'. However,

(a) whenever it is decided to extend a participant's experience, or it is decided to give priority to one set of objectives over another, or decisions are made as to the expertise required of the 'tutor-team', there can be no disguising the fact that these actions imply a judgement of educational principle;

(b) it should be emphasised there may be very good grounds for an actual curriculum not matching the ideal model, or reflecting all its aspects equally. In the UVP context, some of the areas may already have been effectively covered in the young person's previous learning history, or some may need extra attention because of past failure. In the real world, hard decisions have to be taken about priorities when time and resources are limited. Also, 'students' may be more highly motivated in some directions than others,[1] and for this and other reasons, some kinds of outcomes will become more difficult to achieve. Thus, practical decisions have to be taken about whether to go for 'important' objectives that may not be attained, or whether to settle for less significant ones which are more feasible. In any case, humanity as well as tactics require that we should cater for the student's most pressing needs, whether or not an 'even' spread of objectives is achieved. However, what is equally essential is that different types of need are given equal recognition.

An important consideration is that as the young people's experience and age increase, what they need and are able to learn may also increase. For instance, certain concepts which the individual may have found completely inaccessible at school may now be easily developed and adeptly used – because they can be derived from their experience and used immediately to handle it. Thus we need to allow not just for 'slower development' but also for the fact that there are now different ways to learn and different reasons for doing so. Preconceptions, based on the young person's previous performance, about what kinds and 'levels' of objectives are appropriate, need to be avoided.

How can this 'checking' be done?

(a) One approach would argue that education has four basic functions.

Economic – enabling the individual to earn a living, and the society to fund its activities.

Intellectual – developing the ability to reason, evaluate, analyse, and so on.

Notes

[1] Including, of course, manipulative skills.

[2] Which would include the acquisition of certain basic skills, but also some idea of the appropriateness of certain forms with regard to purpose and audience.

[3] Creativity, open ended problem tackling, empathy, for instance. These may be 'encouraged' rather than it being possible to teach them directly.

[4] Core concepts: these are basic ideas which help the young person pattern his experience, and make sense of the world. Without them it may be difficult to deploy acquired skills sensibly, or to organise or retain knowledge. The particular ones will vary from occupation to occupation (see the Yorkshire and Humberside Council for Further Education Mechanical Trades Principles Course as an example). More general ones likely to be relevant for young people in transition might be role and specialisation; value and reward; imagery, metaphor and 'models' (in science and political debate as well as literature); causation and correlation; proportion; energy; rights, duties, fairness, authority etc. Written like this they sound daunting, but they are familiar to young people, if not in these terms, but may need labelling and applying to new contexts.

Types of argument: e.g. (a) those involving 'proof' (generalising or deducing)

(b) those involving 'reasons' (perhaps moral or aesthetic).

the need for more than one framework.

what happens in practice.

Personal – to enable an individual to gain satisfaction from private activities, whether they be reading, fishing or whatever.

Social/Political – enabling someone to operate with others, participate in decision making, understand authority structures, consider rights and obligations, and so on.

(b) Another would say that all people should be enabled to learn the following:

- **practical skills**, physical co-ordination and fitness[1]
- the ability to **communicate** in words, numbers, diagrams, music and so on[2]
- an **imaginative capacity**, practical, intellectual and emotional [3]
- a **capacity for understanding and critical analysis**, involving the ability to use 'core concepts' and handle various types of argument [4]
- the **ability to apply** combinations of the rest to actual situations.

The checking could be a matter of determining the degree of congruence between the derived objectives and one of these (or other) *a priori* analyses. In any event, of course, they should be checked against the aims of UVP (see section 1).

What is the difference between the frameworks used for derivation, and those used for checking, and why suggest two processes at all ?

There are two major reasons:

(a) because no framework is completely adequate, and none of its elements are really separate. There are good reasons for all concerned to use the same framework for derivation, in order to produce a coherent programme. Provision is not therefore split between different agencies, operating on different principles, to the detriment of the student. But this may create the need for checking (to which not only those paid as educators can contribute).

(b) because it seems to reflect practical experience of curriculum development. It is usually found to be easier to derive objectives from analysis of situations, materials or subjects than from more general aims or functions, and this is what usually happens in practice, however the process is later described. But, few would deny that these aims or principles need to be kept in mind, and that the procedure should allow for their influence.

Notes

practising skills

receiving knowledge

developing concepts, and using them

[1] Some attitudes towards reading, for example.

acquiring or examining attitudes

[2] Some religious or political attitudes, for example (attitudes towards work, or competition/co-operation, etc. could be in either category).

[3] The whole area of attitude **change** is one fraught with practical and ethical difficulties. However, some thoughts:

(a) Many attitudes are going to be far more influenced by the general social environment than by a 'lesson'. For example, the employer's organisation of the work activities are likely to encourage 'responsible attitudes' far more effectively than any day-release input.

(b) Some would distinguish between 'procedural values' (such as respect for evidence, tolerance of opposing views) which are very much the direct concern, of 'education', and more substantive values (see [2] above) which may not be.

an example of analysis

(c) See the Section on 'counselling'.

(iii) RELATING LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO OBJECTIVES

Once a given set of outcomes has been decided upon, decisions have to be taken about appropriate teaching and learning methods. It is therefore necessary to analyse them into categories which reflect pedagogical differences.

We suggest division into
skills; knowledge/information; concepts/forms of perception; value/attitudes.

This division is justified on the grounds that:

- **skills** usually imply the need for the teacher to devise exercises and for the students to practice. Thus exposition alone would not, on the face of it, seem suitable.
- **knowledge/information** can be transmitted and received, and one would expect that, usually, attention would be concentrated on efficient transmission of well organised information in an appropriate medium (voice, books, TV, or whatever), in the best circumstances for reception. (Which is not to forget that simulation, projects or whatever can be used to stimulate the desire for the information.)
- **concepts**, on the other hand might be best learned by discussion which encourages them to develop. If concepts, or forms of perception, are 'learned' from books, it is usually either the 'definition' of the concept that is being learned, or the fact that the author is managing to label or crystallise an idea or relationship already part-formed in the mind of the reader.
- **values and attitudes** are probably not 'taught' directly at all. One kind of attitude may change as a result of an individual's skill or knowledge being increased, or experience being extended.[1] However, some attitudes or value systems fulfil a fundamentally important role in the life of the individual, for social and psychological reasons.[2] It can be valuable to discuss them, and to compare one's attitude with those of another, but one is likely to resist any discerned attempt on the part of a teacher to produce a change. Without going into further detail here, the origin and function of an attitude will affect the possibility and means of change (not to mention its desirability).[3]

To take an example. A general objective may be that the participant should become an effective member of a given working group. This may well require such things as the acquisition of a practical skill to justify membership, communication skills which enable the individual to take part in group decision making by being able to comprehend an argument and respond to it, an appreciation of the roles adopted by group members and the authority structure within the group, and a willingness to put aside personal goals for the good of the group. No one learning activity is appropriate to all these. Individual workshop exercises may help with one, simulation with another, group discussion with a third.

Notes

the analysis serves a purpose, but categories are not 'absolute'

Analysis is not always straightforward. For instance, an inability to remember could be a lack of skill, to be remedied by concentration and practice; or it could be that the person concerned lacks a conceptual framework into which to fit the information, or with which to make sense of it. Similarly, inadequate collection of data may require practice with reference books, or be due to an inability to perceive the nature of the problem, requiring discussion. Boorishness may be a matter of attitude, or of lack of social skills.

Also, of course, all this learning is aimed towards more general capacities, such as **understanding** – ourselves, others and our environment. The divisions suggested above should not be allowed to obscure this fact, or to suggest that the areas are logically or psychologically distinct.

Notes

Summary of processes of curriculum development for UVP

DERIVE	the curriculum through establishing a
DIALOGUE	between the employer, young person and a third party (usually a college, sometimes an Industrial Training Board, the Youth Service, etc.)
FOCUSSING ON	the participants as
YOUNG WORKERS	which is what the target group have in common, using a
FRAMEWORK	that attempts to produce a balanced analysis of their situation, then
CHECK	the learning objectives arrived at against a view of what are considered to be the educational needs and rights of the age-group as a whole, and justify or remedy any disparity, then
ANALYSE	the nature of the objectives decided upon in order to determine what learning activities should be planned for, then decide on means of
IMPLEMENTATION	bearing in mind that the
PROCESS	by which these young people learn is probably as important as what they learn, and that it should allow for continuing
EVALUATION	which should include provision for the students to influence what they are receiving.

It is perhaps dangerous to represent a complex situation in this way, or to imply a linear process. There are also many organisational problems, some of which are discussed in subsequent sections.

Part III

Various issues arising in the course of implementation

Notes

interpretation of 'day-release' and 'block-release'.

choice made on administrative or educational grounds

better work/ college integration

longer 'support'

marketing

cumulative learning

[1] This can vary from a simple request for them to watch out for particular features of life at work – for example, how many written or oral instructions are given, how customer complaints are dealt with, or whatever – to arranging for them to undertake specific research, such as interviewing older and more senior workers about the nature of their job and their personal career histories. The more ambitious projects may require the firm's co-operation in allowing time or providing an advisor at work (see section on 'Industrial Tutors').

[2] See Section 10(ii).

Mode

We have a difficulty of terminology in this section.
In many cases, the UVP schemes all take place away from the place of work. This is true both psychologically and administratively. In other words, the participants and organisers conceive the 'scheme' to be that which takes place 'off-site', and it is these activities which are described in the official 'submission' and which are therefore funded. Even so, the experience and learning which occur in-company are, of course, a very important influence on the off-site provision, contributing, justifying and complementing.

Here, we can justifiably describe the mode of the scheme using the conventional phrases 'block-release' and 'day-release'.

In other cases, the learning which takes place at the place of work and even on-the-job is an important and officially recognised part of the scheme. It may even be that the majority of it takes place in-company. Here, use of the same conventional terminology is less appropriate. Nevertheless, it is used in this section for the sake of simplicity.

The choice of day-release or block-release or a combination of both may be a planned part of the curriculum, or – more often perhaps – a decision is dictated by what the employer, college, etc, finds practically possible. In the latter case one can, nevertheless, consider the curricular consequences of the choice.

(i) DAY-RELEASE

Advantages:

(a) For each session the tutor has the material from four days job experience on which to work. She or he also has the possibility of asking the student to undertake investigation at work arising out of college activities, and feeding back into them.[1]

(b) The same total off-site time extends over a longer period than if block-release is used. This means that difficulties and learning opportunities that occur after the initial period of adjustment can still be worked on with the help of college tutors and facilities.

(c) This is often the easiest mode to 'sell' to employers, particularly if their business has 'slow' days each week.

Disadvantages:

(a) Some cumulative learning processes may be disrupted by each return to work to an extent that means that the young person returns to square one each week. This demoralising process can be ameliorated if suitable practice or reinforcement can be arranged in the work situation. This could involve amendment of the normal job pattern, time for project-type work, or the support of an interested person at work.[2]

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Notes

integration into college

group ethos

some counter-measures

[1] As well as tours of the college, explanation of tutors' role and background etc, some tutors make use of games and exercises designed to foster communication and co-operation within the group amongst other things.

individual provision

attendance problems

(b) It can be difficult to enable the students to make full use of the college facilities, or to convince them that they are an equal part of a college community.

(c) The young people may be a long time developing any group spirit or ethos, with a result that certain types of learning activity are less fruitful, and opportunities are lost for them to learn from each other. Relationships with tutors can also take a long time to develop.

Disadvantages (b) and (c) can be ameliorated by starting the scheme with a small amount of block-release to the college, even if it is only two consecutive days in the first week. Employers can often be persuaded to allow this, particularly if it is very early in the young person's time with them and/or at the right time of year. Additionally or alternatively, a period of residence early on in the scheme – even if only a weekend – can serve the same purpose even more effectively. At the least, strategies [1] can be adopted which enable the group to get to know each other, their tutors and the college environment as expeditiously as possible. Thus the pattern of activity in the first few days of release may be different from the later regular pattern.

(d) It can be more difficult to allow for individual needs and differences (See section on group-work) unless the college is very well resourced.

(e) There can be attendance problems. A young person can be encouraged to miss 'just this week' if his firm or section has production problems or his colleagues are ill. Once again, liaison with key figures in the company is crucial.

Notes

range of activities

staff/student relationship

lack of work/college integration

[1] The disadvantages can be all the **more** severe if he has none. In the case of employed people there is the additional disadvantage that the company will have had no chance to assess their performance or note difficulties, and, further therefore, the effect of the UVP scheme will not be apparent to them. In the case of unemployed people the need for simulated work experience is even greater, but it is difficult for a college to reproduce more than the need for job-skills. Even where a workshop is geared to actually produce goods for sale, the social mix, for instance, of a factory is unlikely to be present. This is not to say that such simulation does not have its strength, particularly where some initially 'sheltered' employment is required.

marketing

mixing block and day-release

[2] One scheme operates a modular system, which means that participants can enter or leave at the beginning or end of any module. The college operates a 48 week year which gives flexible starting dates.

(ii) **BLOCK-RELEASE**

Advantages:

(a) More ambitious programmes of individual skill development, visits, simulations, etc. can more easily be arranged. A wider range of the college's physical and human resources can be used.

(b) Relationships between staff and students can develop more easily and be better based. This is a big advantage as long as the relationships are constructive ones. Obviously, in this mode, staff do not have to relate to so many students per week.

(c) Learning can develop further and be consolidated more thoroughly.

(d) The ethos of the college and firm can differ without the resulting 'interference' being too destructive.

Disadvantages:

(a) Young people can become distanced from their work experience. They can fail to apply their learning on their return to work, or fail to perceive its relevance whilst in college. This disadvantage is made the more severe if the student has had little work experience before coming to the college.[1] It can be ameliorated by appropriate simulation, or reproduction of the work situation at college.

(b) It is not possible to give the young people support through their subsequent and developing experience at work.

(c) It can make recruitment of students very difficult. (However, some large firms, or those with a distinctly seasonal trade, may prefer this mode.)

It is, of course, possible to arrange mixtures of block and day-release. Two promising patterns are day release with an initial and concluding 'block', or several short 'blocks' with day-release in the intervening weeks.[2]

Notes

[1] Including tutors from the Youth and Careers Services, YMCA, etc.

size of team

[2] In cases where team meetings are not possible, some co-ordinators operate the 'Gadfly system' – making sure they regularly contact each tutor themselves. Occasional team meetings are obviously still very desirable.

a personal tutor

experienced workers

Staffing

(i) COLLEGE-BASED, OR EXTERNAL [1]

Some scheme organisers advocate a small staff on the grounds of the importance of consistency and personal relationships with these students. Others emphasise that these students respect teachers who can manifestly demonstrate a practical competence in the areas in which they are teaching. This latter philosophy frequently implies a very much larger team of staff. These variations in approach doubtless follow from differences in course design as well as student characteristics. What is certainly true is that if you have a large number of staff involved with a group, even on a block-release basis, the role of the course co-ordinator or tutor is absolutely crucial. He must liaise with tutors to ensure that their work is co-ordinated, correctly phased, and that the opportunities created by one are used by another. He also has to ensure that the philosophy and aims of the course or programme are common to all involved.[2] Conversely, when only a few tutors are involved, there is the danger that they may unintentionally 'skew' the course towards their personal preferences and expertise – at the expense of giving the students a balanced programme. In this case, it may be that a larger team should be involved in the **planning** of the schemes, at least in the sense of providing tutors with skeletal checklists as mentioned elsewhere.

The value of a genuine course 'team', is described elsewhere. It can contribute to curriculum design, evaluation, and staff development.

It is also crucial that the student has one tutor with whom to identify and who can talk about the scheme as a whole and this period of transition in general. This person can then introduce and monitor a range of specialist input, if necessary.

Characteristics of Staff

Some will argue that the best staff to be employed on these schemes are those who have themselves successfully made the same kind of transition from school to work and have had experience of the kind of job for which the students are being prepared. The advantages of such people are obvious, but there are also some potential disadvantages. They may have difficulty in avoiding 'telling' the students too much too quickly. Knowing many of the answers already, they may not be good listeners. Having, in the nature of things, 'made it', they may lack patience with students who show no sign or intention of either acquiring a high level of job skill or of progressing up the company hierarchy.

On the other hand, staff who have had no experience of the kind of work situation in which the students are involved, and who have themselves never really left the educational world, may well 'lack credibility' with the young people. However, their advantage **may** be that when attempting to elicit information, ideas and opinions from the students about the world of work they may prove to be more natural listeners and questioners **because** of their lack of knowledge. They may also, of course, be able to offer some expertise in general areas such as literacy, numeracy, etc.

Notes

non-teachers with experience of young people

characteristics of a team

[1] "The adults concerned must have a degree of genuine commitment to this work, have an unsentimental liking for young people and be able to establish good relationships with them. In practice, these qualities are as important as specific qualifications." HMI Report, on Curricula for non-participant 16–19s, March 1976.

[2] "At work this role of 'primary adult' might be taken by their supervisor or by someone else. Such a person would need to be friendly, supportive, insightful and be the kind of individual who would be sought out for advice by the young person concerned, but who would not simply wait to be approached". First Report of the Study Group on "The Education/ Training of the 16–18 year old" Rubber & Plastics Processing Industry Training Board, April 1975.

[3] "The Working Coach is an ordinary employee in a firm. He or she is not part of the management structure but has experience of life; a person with a concern for young people and who is in good standing with colleagues and contemporaries.

"Ideally the Working Coach is himself supported by regular meetings with other coaches and a consultant. This support is intended to sustain the coaches' creativity and imagination about what they do." The Grubb Institute, discussion papers. (The Grubb Institute of Behavioural Studies, EWR Centre, Cloudesley Street, London N1.)

[4] It may even be that UVP could create a generation of young workers who would take such an interest in their successors.

need to define roles

[5] For instance, who investigates reasons for absence? Or, if the group want to discuss their work experience with a numeracy tutor, should he take advantage of the opportunity or is this trespassing into the remit of the Working Coach or Industrial Tutor?

People who have had experience of young people in a non-teaching capacity, such as youth workers, can have a lot to offer. Their skills can be particularly appropriate when group counselling and discussion are important elements in a scheme, since they are often at home in informal learning situations.

Rather than trying to identify the characteristics of the perfect UVP tutor (there are conflicting views here and in any case few such paragons will exist) it is probably more fruitful for organisers to consider the sum of characteristics that must be present in a UVP 'team', which ideally would genuinely include all those responsible for the young people's learning, wherever it takes place (see below).[1]

(ii) COMPANY-BASED, OR INTERNAL

It will be evident that one of the features which contributes towards unifying a programme is good liaison between the college (or other external agency) and the place of work. Administrative and planning liaison is dealt with elsewhere. It is equally important that the young person's learning should be integrated between the institutions, and a 'tutor' on the work side of the equation can be very beneficial.

'Industrial tutor' is a term used to refer to an individual[2] at a young person's place of work who is briefed to monitor his progress and to be available to offer advice over such things as in-firm project work. This is obviously also the person with whom college staff should liaise concerning the choice of projects, possible links between college and work activity etc. Very often, the tutor will be the young person's immediate supervisor, and in small firms the person with the appropriate contact and knowledge of the young person may be the proprietor or manager.

'Working coach' is used to refer to an experienced worker who is not a professional teacher nor in a supervisory position with regard to the young person. He or she is someone who has experience of the young person's position at work, has him or herself made something positive of both work and adult life and is therefore someone with whom the young person may be willing to identify. His or her role is to conduct group discussion with the young people about their current college, work and other experiences, and generally to support them in coming to terms with them.[3] He or she therefore requires time and space in which to meet them as a group. There may also be a means by which the young people pass on their views about the rest of the programme via the coach.

The use of terms such as 'tutor' or 'coach' is intended to give recognition and support to those concerned. It should not be allowed to detract from the possibility of other ordinary workers taking an interest in their young colleagues' progress.[4]

One cautionary note is that where staff from several agencies are involved in the operating of a scheme, the role of each of them needs to be carefully defined and known to all.[5]

Notes

Whatever particular machinery is adopted in a specific case the important message is

for the employer, that the young person should be accorded 'learner' status whilst on the scheme even whilst at work, and that those in immediate supervisory contact with them should be aware of this and be able to act on the awareness;

for college staff, that non-professionals may have a lot to offer young people, and that the talents and interest of other employees at the place of work should be made use of in support of the young workers' learning and adjustment.

Notes

contact between lecturers and work supervisors

[1] See later section on evaluation, where some examples are given.

the importance of a team.

learning from evaluation.

[2] 'Supervisor' is used in a general sense to refer to those responsible for the young people at work.

support for supervisors

Staff development

This can take place through:

(a) participation in curriculum development and the development of materials

(b) membership of a staff team involved in continuous evaluation

(c) training in specific skills and techniques, and the provision of concurrent advisory support.

If the **college lecturers** are involved in the discussions with the company and the young workers and their supervisors when the scheme is being planned, and particularly if they are able to observe the young people's work activity and environment, then their appreciation of the needs and opportunities for learning, and constraints on it, will be developed. Similarly, if **supervisors** and potential industrial tutors or coaches are involved at this stage, they will be encouraged to perceive the young people as learners, and enabled to get a wider view of their needs.

It has been argued earlier that continuous evaluation of a scheme, involving all concerned, is an important part of the curriculum process. Students and staff can learn from it.[1] The existence of a staff team (preferably involving all tutors, wherever they are based) can be crucial in providing balanced feed-back and mutual support. This can be particularly important where staff are adopting participatory methods and/or broadening the area and type of content with which they deal. Teachers are more vulnerable in this case anyway, and particularly if their previous experience has been of lecturing to traditional syllabuses. Staff will bring varying talents, experience and perceptions to bear, and should be able to learn from each other as well as gaining insight into the scheme as a whole.

Where it is impractical to make the work-supervisors[2] a real part of the staff-team, it may at least be possible to provide regular opportunities for them to discuss their dealings with the young people with a training officer or other colleagues. It usually is possible to involve them in periodic contact with college staff over the choice and progress of student project work, or over an individual's general progress. All this can help them develop their ability to respond to the young people as learners, and to contribute their knowledge and credibility as 'workers' to the scheme.

College staff may also feel the need to acquire additional or up to date knowledge of the industry from which the students come.

Notes

acquiring specific skills.

staff development centred on the UVP curriculum

staff conditions of service

No particular teaching method is likely to be generally applicable. Different methods will be required at different times to suit the students, the objectives and to build on the characteristics of individual tutors. However, if the model of the learning process presented earlier has any validity, it does indicate how different methods might be related and where they might be required. It is at this point that individual tutors might feel the need to acquire particular skills, in the conducting of certain types of discussion, the planning and implementation of role-plays, diagnosis of learning difficulties, preparation of learning materials, or whatever.

These particular skills might well be acquired 'off-site' under the aegis of one of the FE teacher training agencies, though it will be seen that, in general, it is being advocated that staff development should be focussed on the UVP curriculum, and be bound up with its derivation, evaluation and the needs of the students. This is not to say that external support cannot be very beneficial if offered concurrently. Meetings off-site between different staff-teams can also be very helpful in offering stimulation, support and helping avoid parochialism. The 'workshop' format is probably best.

There are implications in all this, of course, for staff conditions. There will be a continuing need for non-teaching time to be spent on team-meetings, evaluation, liaison with companies and so on. The need for this is usually recognised at the start of any new scheme, but in this case some curriculum development must take place for each batch of participants, both before their arrival and during the scheme.

Notes

against a college

for a college

more than one location

[1] Some schemes offer 'optional modules' after the initially agreed period.

minimum length

Location and length

(i) LOCATION

Some argue that it is best if a location can be found which does not carry any associations with previous unhappy educational experiences. Thus a friendly, informal youth club or prestigeous space in an office might be used rather than college premises (even if a tutor is from FE). Use of company premises can save a lot of travelling time when a group is formed within one firm, and its asmosphere can help the young people feel that their learning is purposeful and relevant to their adult work activities. On the other hand, there are other forms of 'relevance', some of the participants may be as disillusioned with work as with education, and the chance to examine their experience in a more detailed way and meet other students and trainees may be appreciated.

Thus other scheme organisers suggest that many of the participants never expected to be able to get within the portals of a college, and can be very pleased to do so as long as they are not relegated to some inferior annexe. The student should not be excluded from the wider facilities of an FE college, such as libraries and common rooms.

Of course, many schemes take place in more than one location, though some organisers feel strongly that it is important for the group to have a base which becomes 'their room', whether or not it is well equipped, and wherever it is.

What probably matters in the end is the motive behind locating the group in a given place; it should be specially chosen for good reasons. Some of the participants will be very sensitive to any signs of their getting what is left after more important people have been accommodated. Obviously too, the choice will reflect the activities planned for the group.

(ii) LENGTH

The Government Statement talked in terms of "12 weeks full-time (or the part-time equivalent)". Many existing schemes approximate to this length, very few exceed it, and some are considerably shorter. A scheme which is, for instance, based on day-release for 10 weeks, will obviously have objectives which differ in extent, and probably in kind, from a scheme which has three 4-week blocks or day-release for 35 weeks plus a residential week.

Some very short schemes have been set up, with the idea of at least 'getting a foot in the door', and attempting to influence an unenthusiastic employer to increase provision by showing what can be done even in so short a time.[1] In any case, where there are problems of employer commitment, or even simple logistics, some feel that anything is better than the nothing these young people **were** receiving. Others feel that there is a minimum time allowance below which their scheme will be ineffective, so that results will not be apparent and neither the employer nor participants will be convinced or have benefited.

Notes

its position in the scheme

[1] College **and** work-based tutors.

involvement of tutors

[2] For instance, one scheme makes use of outdoor activity centre which provides exercises designed to improve self-confidence and reliance and group co-operation and leadership. However, the programme also includes a survey of the shopping pattern of nearby towns, involving various kinds of interview. The participants are from the distribution industry.

[3] Another scheme took participants (on a self-catering basis) to another part of the country, and centred the week's activities around the proposition that the young people were to survey the facilities of the area prior to moving there. Preparation was by the young people, and involved planning, budgeting, catering, establishing work rotas and menus, and establishing areas of study. Daily reports were written up and exchanged during the week.

Residential period

This feature is very highly recommended indeed by tutors, students and employers who have experience of schemes which incorporate it. The general opinion is that it multiplies the effect of the programme, as well as creating the opportunity for types of experience and learning which may not occur otherwise. In short, it is well worth the considerable time, effort and money involved in making the period possible.

It can be placed at or near the start of tne scheme, so that it enables an effective working group to form, establishes staff-student relationships quickly and generally gets the scheme well under way. Events and exercises during the period can be followed up as appropriate in the rest of the course.

Placing a residential period in the middle of the programme allows the students to be prepared emotionally and mentally for it, and at best enables them to participate in the organisation and implementation of it. This, as well as the activities during the period, can be followed up later.

Some place the period at the end, as a culmination to the programme and as a time in which all the learning of the previous weeks is used and consolidated.

Whichever timing is chosen or is feasible, it is very important that some tutors from the rest of the programme[1] take part in this residential part in order to ensure that preparation, implementation and follow-up are as fruitful as possible.

There are, of course, a range of organisations which have considerable experience in and facilities for this kind of provision, and many of them are held in high esteem by employers. The experiences offered can be physically demanding, socially demanding, or a mixture of both.[2]

On the other hand, some schemes have made the problems of organisation, catering and accommodation part of the learning process, and created low-cost self-help residential elements.[3]

Notes

the term is used generally

fears aroused in employers and teachers

case-study

possible benefits

Counselling

In this Section, the term 'counselling' is being used in a **general** sense to refer to activities in which a sympathetic adult helps young people (usually via a group discussion) to interpret their experiences, determine their personal stance with regard to certain issues, consider consequences of possible decisions, and so on. This is referred to in several preceding sections – for instance, in the 'reflection' phase of the learning model in section six, and with regard to the work of industrial tutors or coaches in section ten. Much of it will contribute to the aim mentioned in section one of 'assisting young people to assess their potential and think realistically about job and careers'.

Specialised, expert and private individual counselling is **not** being referred to, although some centres have useful provision for this.

The issue merits a section of its own because of two opposing anxieties which it arouses. On the one hand, some people (usually employers) fear that the process will encourage individuals to be too self-centred, that it can produce restlessness and dissatisfaction unnecessarily, and that it might prevent the individual buckling down to the realities of adult life and of task-centred work. On the other hand, some people (usually teachers) fear that it can be part of a hidden process of conditioning – merely a safety valve which ensures that unsatisfying jobs and difficult conditions are accepted in the end, and the *status quo* is preserved.

Let us take an example. Suppose a young worker is having difficulty in his relationship with a supervisor. Group discussion and debate (in which the view of his colleagues are also important) may help him or her deal with the problem. Neither the employer nor tutor can deny that it is a problem for the young person concerned, and that he or she will have to come to terms with it in one way or another. The discussion – focussing on the young person **in** the situation rather than the situation itself (whether this is seen in terms of the need for industrial discipline on the one hand, or as a consequence of capitalism on the other) – could cover possible courses of action and the consequences. The actions could include complaining to senior management, going to the union, tackling the man directly, adapting, or leaving the firm. The consequences would be complex, and the individual has to consider these and eventually decide on his or her evaluation of them – which things matter most. Any final decision will reflect this, together with the individual's assessment of what action is feasible in view of his or her own skills and personality.

It has to be accepted that all options need to be open for consideration, otherwise the 'counselling' is fraudulent and is likely to be perceived as such by the participants. A few people may come to believe that they are misplaced, and decide to move. Most will probably find a satisfactory relationship to their work and the enterprise as a whole more quickly than would otherwise be the case, possibly reducing labour turnover. Presumably, no one benefits from square pegs being in round holes, but on the other hand it may be that ill-thought-out and impulsive actions which may be harmful both to the young worker and to his employers may be avoided. The employer may also be glad to discover any causes of dissatisfaction.

Notes

potential
in
work

Some argue that assessment of potential in relationship to jobs is only appropriate when the young person is still seeking employment. This is surely too narrow a view. Only when in employment can the young person realistically evaluate the demands of the job, and his or her own abilities will be developing and becoming apparent. In any case, many employers appreciate the need for flexibility in their work force in order to cope with a wider range of tasks as the organisation and/or its technology change.

None of this can obscure the fact that the phrase 'assess their potential and think realistically about jobs and careers' embodies a number of difficult issues, not the least of which is the meaning to be attached to the word 'realistically'. This will always remain, therefore, an issue for debate.

Notes

size of group

from one firm, or many

[1] This stimulates the young people to investigate the context and purpose of their own job, involves them in collecting information by various means, and gives a genuine reason for exercising communication skills. They are usually keen to do it, too.

range of jobs

[2] Tutors report that young workers often get a clearer perspective on the demands and rewards of their own work when discussing and explaining it with others who have different experiences.

variations in ability

The composition of groups

The optimum size usually quoted is somewhere between 12 and 18. Anything smaller makes group exercises and inter-student learning less effective. Larger groups make it even more difficult to deal with individual differences and needs.

If all the participants are recruited from the same firm, then liaison, about their progress, work experience, or whatever, is obviously much easier and it is simpler for any external tutor to keep personal contact with key personnel and the company's affairs in general.

Groups recruited from several employers makes liaison -- both for the purpose of programme-design and for the monitoring of student progress -- all the more difficult and time-consuming. However, it does mean that the external agency is not beholden to one organisation. Another advantage is that the participants can learn more about the world of work in general by interchange with their colleagues. (A very useful teaching device is to arrange for participants to take each other around their respective places of work). [1]

The nature of the work that the young people are involved in is another important factor. However, if the programme has been designed via the dialogue advocated earlier the implications of this should have already been incorporated in the curriculum. Where a group of participants are engaged in broadly similar occupations it will be possible for the college or other external agency to cater for more of the 'job-skill' area, if this is appropriate. Where there is considerable variation in occupations, fruitful possibilities for inter-student learning are provided for the 'work-skills' area. [2]

Where, as will frequently be the case, there is considerable variation in student ability, certain expository forms of teaching are likely to be inappropriate. However, it is likely that their use will be limited in any case for the reasons outlined in earlier sections.

Notes

information from employers

steering group

supervisors

industrial tutors

structuring feedback from participants

[1] These are often used to give some assessment of abilities and needs as well, whilst avoiding the aura of a 'test'.

questionnaires

review sessions

Evaluation

It is probably useful to think of evaluation in two ways.

(i) An evaluation of the extent to which the scheme as a whole and its individual parts have been successful.

(ii) The diagnosis of needs of individual participants at the start of the scheme in order to plan for appropriate learning experiences, and the assessment of their progress during it and their level of attainment by the end.

(i) EVALUATION OF THE COURSE

A variety of methods are being used in an attempt to acquire evidence in this area. There are, of course, three sources of information – the employer, the participant, and the tutors involved.

As far as the employers are concerned, the steering group should be able to convey their overall view as to the success of the scheme. However, more precise information about its effect on the participants can normally be obtained only from their immediate supervisors at work. One set of schemes plans to interview the supervisors, using a preplanned set of questions, at the start of the scheme, at the end of it, and one year later. Where an 'industrial tutor' is involved in the scheme, one of his or her functions is obviously to provide feed-back. In any case, regular contact between tutors and these individuals in the work place must be an important part of the design and monitoring of schemes, as argued elsewhere.

Regular meetings of the team of tutors, allied to a general openness to and encouragement of student comment on the scheme, is also important. Many would argue that on-going evaluation of the scheme in which the young people are involved is an important part of the curriculum itself. It might be said that it is more important to give the participants some influence or negotiating rights over the nature of what they are receiving than it is to have designed a perfectly appropriate scheme in the first place. At the moment, much important feed-back from both staff and students is being obtained informally, if only because of the level of interest and commitment deriving from the fact that it is a pilot scheme. In order to ensure that these processes are continued effectively in the future, it would be wise to formalise them in some way. Tutorial sessions are being used as a regular means of promoting feedback. Many schemes use various kinds of questionnaires[11] at various points in the course. These may be filled in individually or as a group exercise. One scheme has a sizeable session timetabled each week in which all tutors and participants involved meet to review the previous week's work. This device serves many functions. A structured review serves to consolidate and reinforce the learning that has taken place; it also ensures that members of staff are familiar with the work of others and become aware of possible links. It thus serves as a means of staff-development. Additionally, it gives the young people valuable practice in presenting their point of view, responding to the views of others, and 'negotiating' for change. It also symbolises their status in the scheme and their responsibility for it.

Notes

projects

'training diaries'

assessing process

[1] For instance, the way they went about initial planning, collection of data, allocation of tasks, and whether they are aware of ways of improving the process next time.
The City and Guilds of London Institute have prepared a common framework which will be tested with a small number of the pilot schemes. The basis of this approach is that the schemes consist of the participants undertaking projects of various types (in the areas of 'induction to the employing firm', 'job skill and knowledge', and 'communication and social skills'.) It is the systematised method of tackling them which is both the learning experience and the basis for assessment.
It is to be known as the "General Employment Award" scheme.

use of check lists

initial diagnosis

[2] The use of some formal and comprehensive tests has been known to have this effect. Some of the participants will have a great fear of 'failure', and will not distinguish between 'diagnosis' and 'grading'.

profiles and references

certification

In order to help with overall student evaluation of a scheme, one centre arranged that the young people concerned should, as a group project, prepare a video-taped programme about the scheme for the benefit of those who would be joining the next one. In addition to its obvious potential for giving practice in self presentation and the organisation of material, the device also served as an unstressed means of giving the tutors feedback, and would provide a valuable resource during the induction period of the next scheme.

Another strategy is to get the participants to keep a 'training diary', which encourages them to record the nature of their learning activities whilst on the scheme and to comment on what they have learned. Apart from forming the basis for dialogue with individuals concerning their progress, strengths and weaknesses, this also helps different staff and agencies keep track of each other's provision. It can, for instance, help a scheme organiser monitor work experience taking place in a variety of places (and encourages all concerned to regard the young person as a learner or trainee).

(ii) ASSESSMENT OF THE PARTICIPANTS

For the most part, monitoring of the progress of the individuals during the scheme is via their written work on projects and other 'course work', (including such things as the 'training diaries' mentioned above), the examination of any artefacts they may produce, and observations by the tutor of their work in general and activities in groups in particular. In many cases it will be more appropriate to assess the **process** by which the student has produced the end-product (be it a display of photographs, a sound-tape, manufactured article, survey report, or whatever) rather than the end-product itself.[1] This will naturally be the case when the objectives in question are concerned with problem-tackling abilities, the ability to work together in groups, and so on.

Methodical and coherent assessment of the strengths, weaknesses and development of individual participants is much helped by the use of the kind of 'check lists' advocated earlier. These would cover the major learning objectives in question and suggest what 'signals' tutors should look for as indicators of difficulty, progress or attainment.

A similar operation can be conducted at or before the start of the scheme in order to help determine the likely needs of individuals. The use of more formal diagnostic procedures needs to be considered with care where there is a possibility that the process of assessment itself may discourage participants and even cause them to leave the scheme.[2]

The existence of the above mentioned check lists can also help in the production of student 'profiles' and references. Many existing schemes offer certificates to the participants usually indicating the nature of the areas of study undertaken. Some give a verbal indication of the individual's performance in these areas. The issue of whether or not certificates should indicate that individuals have 'passed' is a vexed one. Some people argue that the young people are the ones who have always suffered from such certification, in the sense that their 'failure' has legitimated others 'success'. They would also argue that the existence of such certification, however subtle and humane it was in fact, would deter many young people from participating in the scheme in the first place.

Notes

[1] In other words, the 'pass level' is determined by reference to some absolute (and realistic) standard of competence, not by saying that it is what 'X%' of the group will achieve. The problem here is that the motivational powers of most certification derives from the fact that not everyone **does** pass, and that to have done so confers an advantage over others.

spiral curriculum

'capacity for self-evaluation' as a learning objective.

Others would argue, on the other hand, that here was a chance, at last, to reward these young people with a certificate, and that it was possible to organise the assessment in such a way that the risk of failure was much reduced or even removed altogether. This approach implies, of course, that the assessment must be criterion rather than norm-referenced.[11] It also implies that some may take longer to reach the required standard than others. The assessment of 'process' can be a useful technique here since it allows operation of a 'spiral curriculum'. That is, the participants can repeat a similar process as many times as necessary, using different material, content, or problems each time. Each 'cycle' takes the students further in their ability to deal with more subtle and complex elements of the process.

Whether or not it is formalised, evaluation of the course and individual participants is obviously necessary for effective learning and appropriate teaching. The one precept might be that the young people themselves should be centrally involved in the evaluation, and that, indeed, the ability to evaluate one's own potential and progress should be a major objective of the scheme.

Notes

use of community – wide resources

[1] This requires considerable 'capital investment' in time, money and storage facilities. This could be a major problem for institutions which have not catered for this target group before. Recurrent costs are, of course, a lot less.

learning materials

managing resources.

students as a resource.

accommodation

Resources

There is considerable potential for the students to have access to a wide variety of physical and human resources if the employer, local community and an FE college are all involved in a scheme.

From a tutor's point of view, there may be considerable need in the initial stages to develop or adapt appropriate material for such things as educational games or stimulations and individual learning packages for improving language ability or numeracy.[1] The companies involved may be able to offer useful raw material, but this will require careful organising and structuring to obtain the maximum educational benefit. The acquisition of material and its adaptation does in itself contribute to staff development, but training in diagnostic skills and the construction of learning materials may be necessary. Team teaching between staff experienced in technical and communication skills can be very fruitful.

As mentioned earlier, some staff may feel the need to acquire more background knowledge of the industry or trade from which the students come. However, if he or she can adopt the role of 'manager of learning resources', it is possible to use material and personnel from the industry and also to get the students themselves to collect information and share knowledge and experiences. The ability to learn from the students may be important, because even teachers of 'vocational subjects', may not have experienced the type or level of work of their students, and in many cases a wide range of experience will be present in one group.

The issue of the location for the scheme is mentioned in section 12. It may be important to find surroundings which are more comfortable (and less threatening to many participants) than the conventional classroom. On the other hand it may be necessary to have the space and facilities to simulate work and other situations, on occasion.

The general issue of resource implications is raised again in the conclusion to this document.

Notes

In conclusion

GENERAL CURRICULAR PRINCIPLES

Four general principles seem to emerge from the considerations put forward in this document.

(a) Curricular discussion should centre on the needs of identifiable young people entering their first employment, rather than on the requirements of the job itself on the one hand, or the general educational needs of young people on the other. This can help with the breaking down of old barriers, whilst still satisfying the legitimate aspirations of employers and the education service, and relating economic and social perspectives.

(b) **Analysis** of these 'needs' must of necessity take place in some conceptual framework. Any system of headings or labels should be consciously chosen with an awareness of its strengths and weaknesses, and it is probably desirable that different frameworks should be used for derivation, implementation and 'balancing'. It must be possible for all the organisations involved to operate within the same frameworks, and the **learning process** must be viewed in a way which does not prejudge its nature and location. It is suggested that to view learning as a combination of experience, reflection and specific learning may be of help.

(c) If those responsible for the young people at college and at work can establish the right kind of dialogue in which to discuss the jobs and needs of individual young people, then – at one and the same time – curriculum development, staff development and liaison between 'industry' and 'education' will be taking place. If we regard these as three different aspects of the same process, then a genuinely unified curriculum is possible, and the perceptions of the various staff concerned will be extended and sharpened.

(d) It may be more important to establish effective procedures by which the curriculum can be influenced by the young people concerned, than it is to get the 'content' of the scheme absolutely right in the first place. Making such feedback part of the scheme itself ensures that it is responsive to variations in need and contributes towards developing autonomy in the young people by encouraging in them a responsibility for their own learning.

THE MARKETING OF SCHEMES AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Problems about recruitment of young people for these schemes are not, as such, the concern of this document. However, it is obvious that the curriculum development strategy advocated implies a certain kind of approach to employers and their requirements by a recruiting agency. Similarly, the problem of resource allocation is for others to take up, but, there is the clear implication in this document that fresh curriculum development must take place for each group of participants. There will, of course, be some 'non-recurrent expenditure' of time, effort and materials. Learning materials and activities can be designed, most of which will be useful at various points in subsequent schemes; tutors will acquire skills and knowledge; the procedures set up for liaison, monitoring and evaluation will be of continuing use. However, the use of the procedures is not just necessary in order to set up a scheme in the first place, but is an integral part of each

subsequent scheme, and therefore needs to be built into the regular work pattern of the individuals and institutions concerned. Some short cuts may be possible when the same company provides a series of UVP groups, but many schemes will recruit from different employers (and occupations) each time. If, after the experimental stage in which extra resources and efforts are available, schemes are forced to become static, it is very likely that their effectiveness will decline and their unity will decay.

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